

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 05262 210456Z

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R 202119Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8072

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

UNCLAS PARIS 05262

E. O. L1652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ET, FT, FR, SO

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON
DJIBOUTI

1. LE QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS OF FEBRUARY 20 CARRIES AN
INTERVIEW WITH FON MIN KIFLE WODAJI BY CORRESPONDENT
YVES DE CHAZOURNES. EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF HIS COM-
MENTS ON TFAI FOLLOWS:

2. QUESTION: FOR THE FIRST TIME YESTERDAY, YOU STATED
IN A COMMUNIQUE WHICH FOLLOWED AN IRAQI STATEMENT OF
POSITION ON DJIBOUTI THAT THE PEOPLE OF DJIBOUTI OUGHT
TO DETERMINE THEIR FUTURE WITHOUT "PRECONDITIONS".
BUT THE CONDITION THAT ALI AREF POSES FOR THE INDE-
PENDENCE OF THE TERRITORY IS THE MAINTENANCE OF A
FRENCH PRESENCE.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 05262 210456Z

KIFLE: WE UNDERSTAND VERY WELL THAT THE PEOPLE OF

DJIBOUTI ARE ASKING FOR GUARANTEES FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE. AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ASPECT OF THINGS SHOULD BE IGNORED. THESE GUARANTEES COULD BE THE COMMITMENT NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE TERRITORY, OR AN ACCORD UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU, BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA, SCRUPULOUSLY TO RESPECT THE INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI AND NOT TO INTERVENE UNILATERALLY IN THE TERRITORY. IT IS UP TO THE OAU TO FIND THIS AGREEMENT.

3. Q: DO YOU HAVE CONTACTS WITH THE OPPOSITION IN DJIBOUTI AND, IN PARTICULAR, WITH THE OPPOSITION PARTY, THE L.P.A.I.?

K: OUR POLICY IS TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH ALL OF DJIBOUTI'S POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE. THUS WE HAVE HAD CONTACTS WITH THE L.P.A.I. AND DETAILED CONVERSATIONS WITH ITS LEADERS. WE TOLD THEM THAT WE HAVE NO CLAIM ON DJIBOUTI. BEFORE ALI AREF CAME TO ADDIS, THE L.P.A.I. CAME HERE. WE REALIZE THAT IT REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE POLITICAL PANORAMA AND THAT IT OUGHT TO TAKE PART IN PREPARATIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE. WE THINK IT OUGHT TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO PROMOTE ITS PROGRAM. WE ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH ALI AREF IF HE MAKES THE FRENCH PRESENCE A SINE QUA NON CONDITION FOR INDEPENDENCE. AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE OAU WOULD CREATE A MORAL GUARANTEE WHICH, WITH OAU VIGILANCE, OUGHT TO BE SUFFICIENT. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE GUARANTEED.

4. Q: YOU DO NOT THINK THAT THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI IS INDISPENSABLE?

K: WE DON'T THINK SO, BUT IT IS UP TO THE POPULATION OF DJIBOUTI TO DECIDE -- BUT AFTER INDEPENDENCE. AS FOR OURSELVES, WE THINK THAT THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN DJIBOUTI COULD BE REPLACED BY OTHER GUARANTEES.

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PAGE 03 PARIS 05262 210456Z

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